

WPA Posters Stamps Issued March 7 at FDR Library & Museum

On March 7 the USPS issued its booklet of 20 Forever stamps featuring 10 WPA Posters designs.

The First Day of Issue Ceremony was held at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum in Hyde Park, N.Y.

One of the featured speakers at the Ceremony was David B. Roosevelt, grandson of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, who stated, "These stamps commemorate the work of my grandfather's most ambitious New Deal program and the artwork generated from the WPA artists. Much of the artwork adorned public buildings built by WPA employees. Perfect examples include the post offices in Poughkeepsie, Hyde Park and Rhinebeck, to name only a few in the Hudson Valley, and many others around the nation."

Also participating was USPS Postmaster General Megan J. Brennan, who dedicated the stamps and stated, "It is undeniable that Franklin Delano Roosevelt understood the importance of visual design and how it could communicate powerful messages of optimism, hope and perseverance. It is also fitting that these WPA posters are being memorialized on postage stamps, because President Roosevelt had a lifelong fascination with stamps as artwork."

The posters were created by Depression-era artists employed by the Poster Division of the WPA Federal Art Project. The poster designs originally were created to support the civic-minded ideals of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

Formed in 1935 as the Works Progress Administration — renamed Work Projects Administration in 1939 — the WPA provided millions of jobs during the Great Depression. Lasting until 1943, the WPA's Federal Art Program's Poster Division



Left, historian Anthony Musso and Megan Brennan, right, David Roosevelt



"Air Mail" by painter Daniel Rhodes is a nearly 12-foot long work in oil on canvas. Installed in 1941, it is still on display in the Piggott, Arkansas, Post Office. Source: Wikipedia.



From the 1930s Celebrate the Century sheet, Sc. 3185e, commemorated the New Deal

was absorbed into World War II programs.

WPA artists greatly advanced silkscreen-printing, an economical medium, also employing wood-block and lithographic processes. At the height of the Federal Art Program, cities in 18 states had Poster Project offices, printing two million posters of approximately 35,000 designs. Posters were displayed in public

spaces and municipal buildings to encourage domestic travel, education, health, conservation and other civic ideals, while stimulating morale and the economy. Decades of obscurity followed the posters' disappearance from the American scene but appreciation of the posters' distinctive style and artistic influence has grown since their re-discovery.

Background on Poster Designs

Many records about the Poster Division are long lost. Known poster office locations and publication dates are as follows:

- "Hiking," Chicago, 1939.
- "Field Day," Chicago, 1939.
- "Discover Puerto Rico, U.S.A.," New York City, ca. 1936–40.
- "City of New York Municipal Airports," New York City, ca. 1936–37.
- "Visit the Zoo," Pennsylvania, ca. 1936–41.
- "Work With Care," Philadelphia, ca. 1936–37.
- "The National Parks Preserve Wild Life," New York City, ca. 1936–39.
- "Work Pays America! Prosperity," New York City, ca. 1936–41.
- "See America Welcome to Montana," New York City, ca. 1936–39.
- "The United States' First Foreign Trade Zone," New York City, 1937.

The posters featured on these stamps are from the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, which houses the largest collection of WPA posters.

To view many of the WPA New Deal Posters and Murals that can still be found throughout the United States, go to <https://livingnewdeal.org>.